

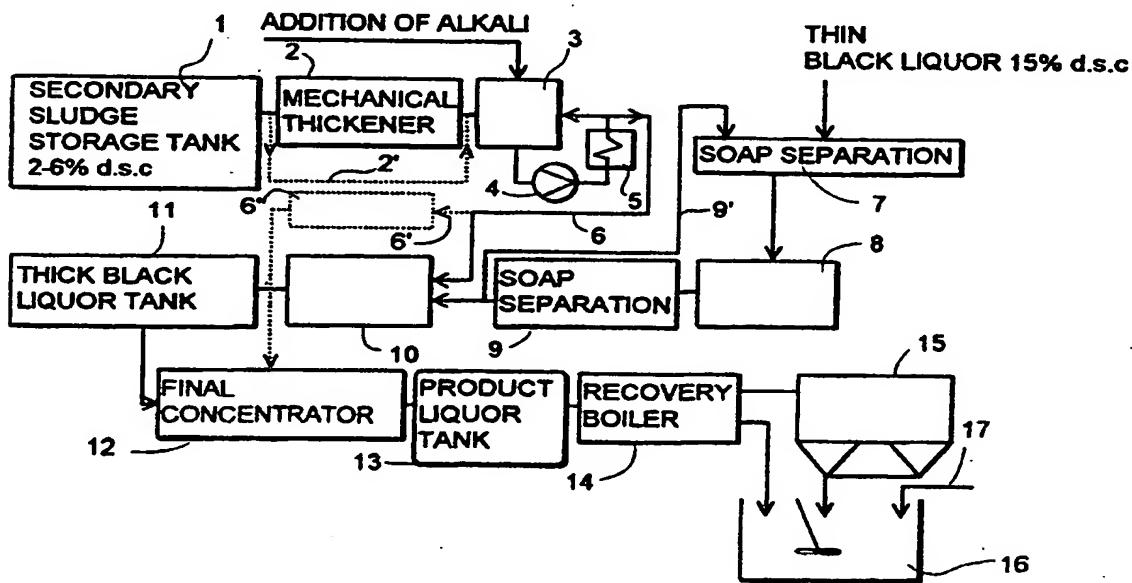


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(54) Title: A METHOD FOR BURNING SECONDARY SLUDGE IN A RECOVERY BOILER



(57) Abstract

A method for burning secondary sludge in a recovery boiler, in which method secondary sludge is mixed with black liquor. According to the method, an alkali is added to the secondary sludge so as to obtain a mixture having a pH of over 7, whereafter the mixture of alkali and secondary sludge is heated to a temperature of over 80 °C and kept at this temperature for over 30 minutes. Thereafter, the heat-treated mixture of alkali and secondary sludge is supplied to the thick end of a black liquor evaporation plant.

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A method for burning secondary sludge in a recovery boiler

5 The invention relates to a method for burning secondary sludge in a recovery boiler, said method comprising mixing secondary sludge with black liquor and supplying the mixture to a recovery boiler.

10 Considerable amounts of secondary sludge are produced yearly in connection with biological waste-water treatment in paper and pulp mills. Secondary sludge is mainly organic material which can be separated from the mill waste-water as suspended matter. The disposal of secondary sludge is rather problematic, as all methods currently used are costly or difficult to employ. Conventionally secondary sludge has been disposed of by trucking it to a dumping ground or composting, or burning it together with an auxiliary fuel in a solid fuel boiler.

15 Before being trucked to a dumping ground, secondary sludge must be pretreated. Furthermore, the treated waste material requires a great deal of space. All this is rather costly. The secondary sludge must be composted with various additives, such as bark suspension or the like. The humus which is obtained by composting and which is in principle fit for use may be difficult to sell, and it is fairly expensive to dispose of it in some other way. If secondary sludge is burnt in a solid fuel boiler, it must be mixed with at least the same amount of bark or fibre suspension. The resulting mixed suspension has a low dry solids content, approximately 30%, and therefore the burning requires an auxiliary fuel. Such burning is financially unprofitable. Another factor that increases the costs is that the fibre suspension which would thus be required to be burnt with the secondary sludge could otherwise be

recirculated to the process as fibrous raw material and sold with the final product. The burning of secondary sludge in a solid fuel boiler may also involve risks because so-called super toxins, such as dioxins, may be formed from chlorine compounds at low temperatures. It is thus not recommendable to dispose of secondary sludge in this way. Moreover, the burning of secondary sludge in a solid fuel boiler increases corrosion of the heat transfer surfaces on account of low fuel temperature and the chemicals contained in the secondary sludge.

The publication "Disposal of secondary sludge in the kraft recovery system" by W. J. Frederick, T. M. Grace and T.W. Joyce, Proc. Environmental Conf. Chem. Soc. Dir. Inst. Pap. Chem., Appleton, Wisconsin, USA 1980, pp. 43-47, discloses the burning of secondary sludge in a recovery boiler. According to this publication, fairly small amounts of secondary sludge were added to black liquor before evaporation of the black liquor. In order for the fouling of heat transfer surfaces in the evaporation plant to be reduced, the secondary sludge was treated with white liquor before being added to the black liquor. In this publication it was found to be problematic that the separation of soap is less efficient when the black liquor comprises secondary sludge.

It is also known to burn secondary sludge by mixing it with black liquor as, for example, in the solution disclosed in Finnish Patent No. 80,664. This patent discloses a method in which soap separated from black liquor and acid are added to secondary sludge so as to obtain a mixture having a pH of 2 to 5. Thereafter the sludge is dewatered by pressing to obtain a dry solids content of about 20 to 25%. The sludge is then added to the black liquor prior to the evaporation plant. In the evaporation plant, soap is separated from

the black liquor comprising sludge, and the soap is reused for the treatment of secondary sludge. This solution requires that the sludge be concentrated by pressing so that it would be suitable for the process. 5 It further requires the use of additional acid, which increases the treatment costs. Even in this solution the separation of soap is less efficient because the liquor contains sludge, which further reduces the usefulness of the method. The fouling of heat transfer surfaces is 10 also an obvious risk in the method according to Finnish Patent No. 80,664.

15 The object of the present invention is to provide such a method for burning secondary sludge in a recovery boiler in which the problems pertaining to the separation of soap and the fouling of heat transfer surfaces of the evaporation plant can be avoided more efficiently than in the previous methods. A further 20 object of the invention is to provide an economical and environmentally safe method for disposing of secondary sludge by burning it in a recovery boiler. The method of the invention is characterized by adding an alkali to secondary sludge so as to obtain a mixture having a pH of over 7, heat treating the mixture of alkali and secondary sludge by keeping it at a predetermined 25 temperature for a predetermined time, and mixing the heat treated mixture of alkali and secondary sludge with black liquor in the evaporation plant, after soap separation.

30 An essential feature of the invention is that a suitable alkali, such as sodium hydroxide or liquor taken from the pulping process, is added to secondary sludge so that the resulting mixture of alkali and secondary sludge is alkaline with a pH of preferably from 9 to 13. Another feature of the invention is that 35 the secondary sludge is heat treated under alkaline

conditions at a temperature of over 80°C, preferably 90 to 110°C, e.g. for about an hour. Still another feature of the invention is that the heat treated secondary sludge is mixed with black liquor after the separation of soap, preferably at a step where the dry solids content of the black liquor is over 25%. In addition, the invention has the essential advantage and result that the secondary sludge does not remain at the liquor cycle in the evaporation plant.

10 The advantage of the invention is that the alkali used in the heat treatment is derived from the pulping process or is suitable for use as a substitution chemical, such as sodium hydroxide. A further advantage of the invention is that the separation of soap can be effected without interruption, and the fouling of heat transfer surfaces in the evaporation plant can be kept to the minimum or essentially similar as without the secondary sludge. Yet another advantage is that when secondary sludge is burnt in a recovery boiler, its heat energy is recovered and environmental emissions are minimized.

In the following the invention will be described with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which

25 Figure 1 is a schematic view of an embodiment of the method of the invention, and

Figure 2 is a schematic view of the transfer of crystal nuclei, which pertains to the application of the invention.

30 Figures 1 and 2 illustrate schematically a process and apparatus partially known per se for treating black liquor and feeding it into a recovery boiler, and a recovery boiler. Figure 1 further shows an embodiment for treating secondary sludge and mixing it with black liquor. The same reference numerals are used for

the same components in both figures, and they will not be defined again in connection with Figure 2 unless necessary for the treatment or feeding of the secondary sludge. In the following description and the claims, the 5 dry solids content (d.s.c.) is expressed as percentages by weight.

Figure 1 shows a storage tank 1 for secondary sludge, to which secondary sludge with a dry solids content of 2 to 6% is supplied. The secondary sludge is conducted therefrom to a mechanical thickener 2, e.g. a band filter, drum filter, centrifuge or the like. From the thickener the secondary sludge is supplied to a heat treatment tank 3, to which an alkali is added so as to render the pH of the mixture of secondary sludge and alkali over 7, preferably 9 to 13. The added alkali may 10 be sodium hydroxide, white liquor from the pulping process, oxidized white liquor or black liquor from the evaporation plant with a dry solids content of over 25%. These can be selected according to the need and also 15 changed if necessary in view of the process. The secondary sludge can also be mixed with an alkali and heat treated without mechanical thickening, as indicated with broken line 2'. From the tank 3 the mixture of alkali and secondary sludge is circulated by means of 20 a pump 4 through a heat exchanger 5 and back to the tank 3, and is thus heated to a temperature of over 80°C, preferably 90 to 110°C. From the tank 3 the mixture of alkali and secondary sludge, heat treated for about an 25 hour, is conducted through piping 6 to the thick end 10 of the evaporation plant. Prior to the evaporation plant, part of the soap is separated from thin black liquor in the thin liquor tank 7, from where the thin black liquor is further conducted to the thin end 8 of the evaporation plant, whereafter the soap is finally 30 separated from the black liquor in an intermediate 35

liquor tank 9. The term "thin end" refers to the inlet end of an evaporation plant, i.e. the part into which thin black liquor is fed; correspondingly, the term "thick end" refers to the end part of an evaporation plant, i.e. the part towards which black liquor with a higher dry solids content flows while it is dewatered through evaporation, and from which the black liquor is supplied further to a recovery boiler. The black liquor is further supplied to the thick end 10 of the evaporation plant, to which the mixture of alkali and secondary sludge is also conducted through piping 6 after the intermediate liquor tank 9, i.e. after the soap separation step. After the intermediate liquor tank 9 part of the black liquor can be recirculated to the thin liquor tank 7 through piping 9'. From the thick end 10 of the evaporation plant the black liquor is supplied to a thick liquor tank 11, and therefrom to an additional, i.e. final, concentrator 12, in which the final step of concentration is effected, and further through a tank 13 to a recovery boiler 14. The evaporation process and equipment are generally known per se to one skilled in the art, wherefore they will not be described more closely herein. From the recovery boiler 14 flue gases are conducted to a dust filter 15, which is preferably an electrostatic precipitator. The ashes of the recovery boiler 14 and those of the electrostatic precipitator 15 are transferred to an ash mixing tank 16 and recirculated to the chemical cycle. The crystal nuclei needed in the process can also be transferred from the same ash mixing tank 16. The transfer of crystal nuclei will be described in connection with Figure 2.

The final concentrator 12 and the concentration of liquor effected therein are known per se from U.S. Patent No. 5,112,441, which is incorporated herein.

Example 1

Sodium hydroxide (concentration 50%) was added to a stream of secondary sludge (12 tons of dry solids/day; dry solids content 12%; pH about 6) until a mixture having a pH of 10 to 11 was obtained (about 1000 l/day). The alkaline secondary sludge was heated to a temperature of 100°C and kept at this temperature for 1½ hours. The secondary sludge was then supplied to an evaporation plant after an intermediate liquor tank and mixed with a stream of black liquor (1200 tons of dry solids/day; dry solids content about 30%; pH 12 to 13), which was concentrated to thick black liquor (dry solids content about 70%). The resulting thick black liquor comprising secondary sludge was further conducted to an additional concentrator, where the resulting liquor mixture was concentrated under a pressure higher than the atmospheric pressure (pressure 3.5 bar, temperature 170°C) to product black liquor, the dry solids content of which was about 83 to 85%. The obtained product black liquor was supplied to a recovery boiler while a high pressure and an elevated temperature (1.5 bar, 135°C) were maintained.

25 An alternative to the above-described feeding
of secondary sludge is to conduct the mixture of alkali
and secondary sludge after heat treatment through piping
6' past the thick end 10 of the evaporation plant and
the thick liquor tank 11 directly to the final concen-
trator 12. The heat treatment and the addition of an
alkali are effected as described above. A possible
separate evaporation unit 6" for the concentration of
merely secondary sludge is also indicated in Figure 1
with broken lines. An evaporation unit 6" of this kind

is not necessary, but under certain conditions it may be advisable to have one.

Example 2

5 Sodium hydroxide (concentration 50%) was added to a stream of secondary sludge (12 tons of dry solids/day; dry solids content 12%; pH about 6) until a mixture having a pH of 10 to 11 was obtained (about 1000 l/day). The alkaline secondary sludge was heated
10 to a temperature of 100°C and kept at this temperature for 1½ hours. The secondary sludge was then supplied to an evaporation plant after an intermediate liquor tank and mixed with a stream of black liquor (1200 tons of dry solids/day; dry solids content about 30%; pH 12 to
15 13), and the resulting black liquor containing secondary sludge was evaporated to thick black liquor with a dry solids content of about 70%. The resulting thick black liquor could be supplied directly to a recovery boiler.

20 Figure 2 illustrates the transfer of crystal nuclei for the process. Figure 2 shows only that part of Figure 1 which is necessary for the transfer of crystal nuclei. The effect of crystal nuclei and the advantages of their use in view of the evaporation process are generally known per se and obvious to one skilled in the art e.g. from "Sodium salt scaling in connection with evaporation of black liquors and pure model solutions" by Ladislav Novak, Svensk pappers-tidning No. 8, 1979, which is incorporated herein as background art. The transfer of crystal nuclei and the technology pertaining to it are also known per se and will not be described in this application. In the case of Figure 2, crystal nuclei are transferred from the ash mixing tank 16. The above-mentioned article discloses
25 the purpose and use of crystal nuclei in principle,
30
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whereas Figure 2 and the associated description illustrate some technical embodiments. In addition to this, there are also known some other technical embodiments which can be used correspondingly; they will, however, not be described herein. To avoid the mixing of secondary sludge with black liquor before the separation of soap, the black liquor must be recirculated to the process after the transfer of crystal nuclei at a process step where they will not be mixed.

5 The first alternative is to take the black liquor from the intermediate liquor tank 9. In this case, the liquor which is supplied to the ash mixing tank 16 through piping 17 does not contain secondary sludge and can be recirculated to any part of the evaporation plant through piping 18 without any problems. The second alternative is to take the liquor used for transferring crystal nuclei from the thick liquor tank 11 through piping 17' indicated with a broken line. In this case,

10 the black liquor contains secondary sludge and cannot be recirculated to the evaporation plant before the soap separation step, as it would nullify the advantages of the invention in soap separation. Therefore the black liquor must in this case be recirculated from the ash mixing tank 16 through piping 18', indicated with a broken line, to the thick end 10 of the evaporation plant after the separation of soap.

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In the above and in the drawings the invention is described merely by way of example, and it is by no means restricted to this. Depending on the structure of the evaporation plant, the location of the intermediate tanks, etc., the secondary sludge can be supplied after heat treatment to several different process steps after the soap separation step. It must, however, be borne in mind that the treated secondary sludge is not recircu-

30

lated to the evaporation plant before soap separation
on account of the transfer of crystal nuclei.

Claims:

1. A method for burning secondary sludge in a recovery boiler, said method comprising adding an alkali to secondary sludge so as to obtain a mixture having a pH of over 7, heat treating the mixture of alkali and secondary sludge by keeping it at a predetermined temperature for a predetermined time, mixing the heat treated mixture of alkali and secondary sludge with black liquor in an evaporation plant after soap separation, concentrating the resulting mixture of secondary sludge and black liquor by dewatering it through evaporation to obtain a thick mixture, and supplying the resulting black liquor mixture containing secondary sludge to a recovery boiler.
5
2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the mixture of alkali and secondary sludge is heat treated at a temperature of over 80°C, preferably 90 to 110°C.
10
3. A method according to claim 2, wherein the heat treatment time is over 30 minutes.
15
4. A method according to claim 1, wherein the pH of the secondary sludge is adjusted to 9 to 13 prior to the heat treatment.
20
5. A method according to claim 1, wherein the alkali added to the secondary sludge is sodium hydroxide.
25
6. A method according to claim 1, wherein the alkali added to the secondary sludge is liquor taken from the chemical cycle of a pulp mill.
30
7. A method according to claim 1, wherein the secondary sludge is concentrated prior to the addition of an alkali to a dry solids content of 6 to 20%.
35
8. A method for burning secondary sludge in a recovery boiler, said method comprising adding an alkali to secondary sludge so as to obtain a mixture having a

pH of over 7, heat treating the mixture of alkali and secondary sludge by keeping it at a predetermined temperature for a predetermined time, mixing the heat treated mixture of alkali and secondary sludge with black liquor in an evaporation plant after soap separation, concentrating the resulting mixture of secondary sludge and black liquor by dewatering it through evaporation to obtain a thick mixture, and supplying the resulting black liquor mixture comprising secondary sludge to a recovery boiler, whereby part of the black liquor is separated and conducted to an ash mixing tank of the recovery boiler to transfer crystal nuclei, and from the ash mixing tank the black liquor containing ash is recirculated to the evaporation plant.

9. A method according to claim 8, wherein, for the transfer of crystal nuclei, black liquor is conducted from the thick liquor tank after the feeding of secondary sludge to the ash mixing tank, and the black liquor containing ash is recirculated to the evaporation plant, to the step of secondary sludge feeding or thereafter.

10. A method according to claim 8, wherein the black liquor used for transferring crystal nuclei is separated prior to the step of secondary sludge feeding.

11. A method for burning secondary sludge in a recovery boiler, said method comprising adding an alkali to secondary sludge so as to obtain a mixture having a pH of over 7, heat treating the mixture of alkali and secondary sludge by keeping it at a predetermined temperature for a predetermined time, mixing the heat treated mixture of alkali and secondary sludge with thick black liquor in the final step of black liquor concentration, in which the final concentration of the black liquor is effected under pressure at a temperature higher than the atmospheric boiling point of black

liquor, and the resulting black liquor mixture containing secondary sludge is supplied to a recovery boiler at a pressure higher than the atmospheric pressure and at an elevated temperature.

5 12. A method according to claim 11, wherein the final concentration is effected by heating the obtained black liquor mixture by indirect heating to a temperature of at least 115°C, and wherein the black liquor mixture is concentrated to a dry solids content of over 10 80%.

10 13. A method according to claim 11, wherein the mixture of alkali and secondary sludge is concentrated in a separate evaporation plant prior to being supplied to the final step of black liquor concentration.

15 14. A method for burning secondary sludge in a recovery boiler, said method comprising adding an alkali to secondary sludge so as to obtain a mixture having a pH of over 7, heat treating the mixture of alkali and secondary sludge by keeping it at a predetermined temperature for a predetermined time, mixing the heat treated mixture of alkali and secondary sludge with black liquor in the evaporation plant after soap separation, concentrating the resulting mixture of secondary sludge and black liquor by dewatering it through evaporation to obtain a thick mixture, and supplying the resulting thick black liquor comprising secondary sludge to the final concentration step, in which the concentration of the black liquor mixture is effected under pressure at a temperature higher than the atmospheric boiling point of black liquor, and from which the concentrated black liquor mixture is supplied to a recovery boiler under a pressure higher than the atmospheric pressure and at an elevated temperature.

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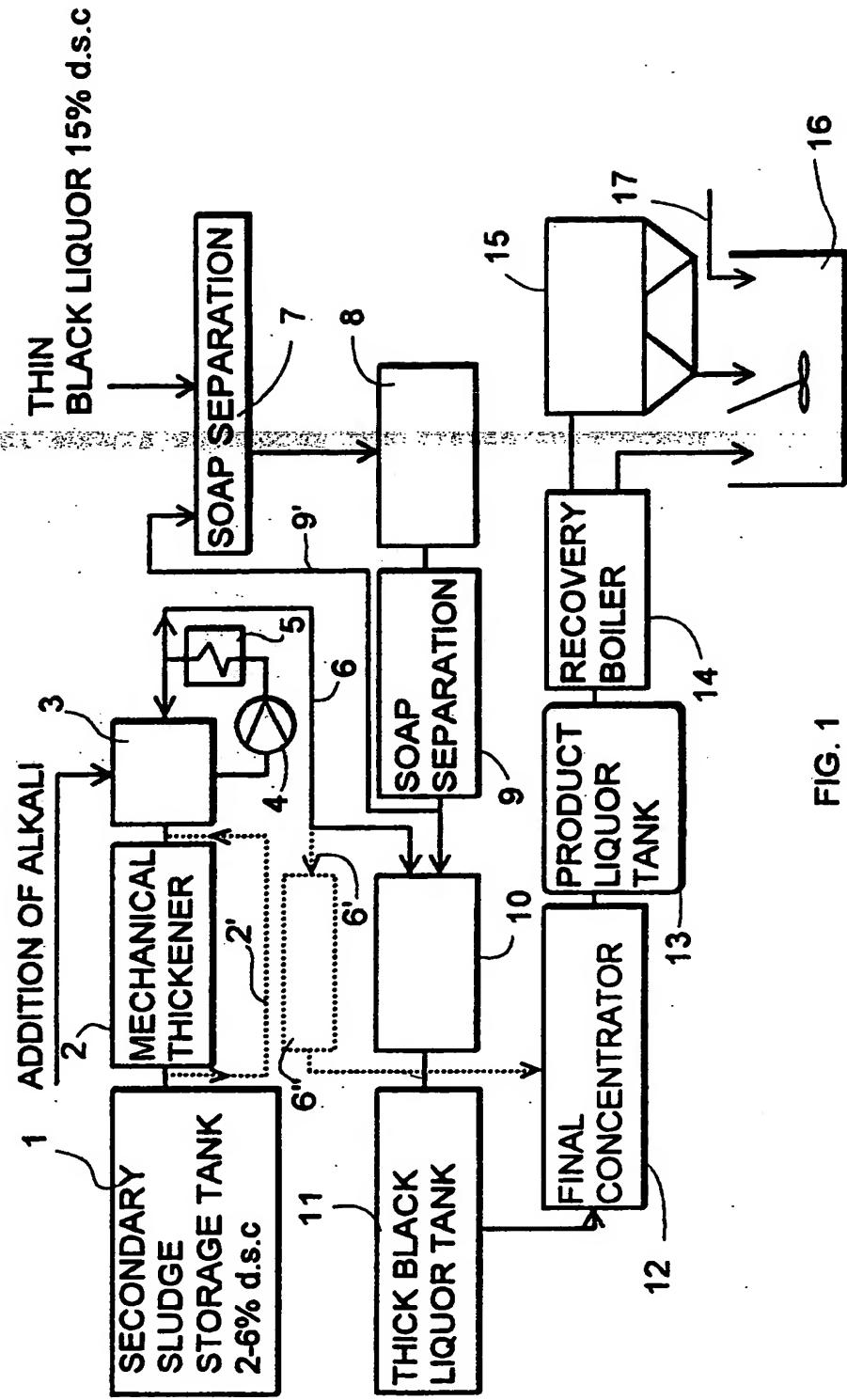


FIG. 1

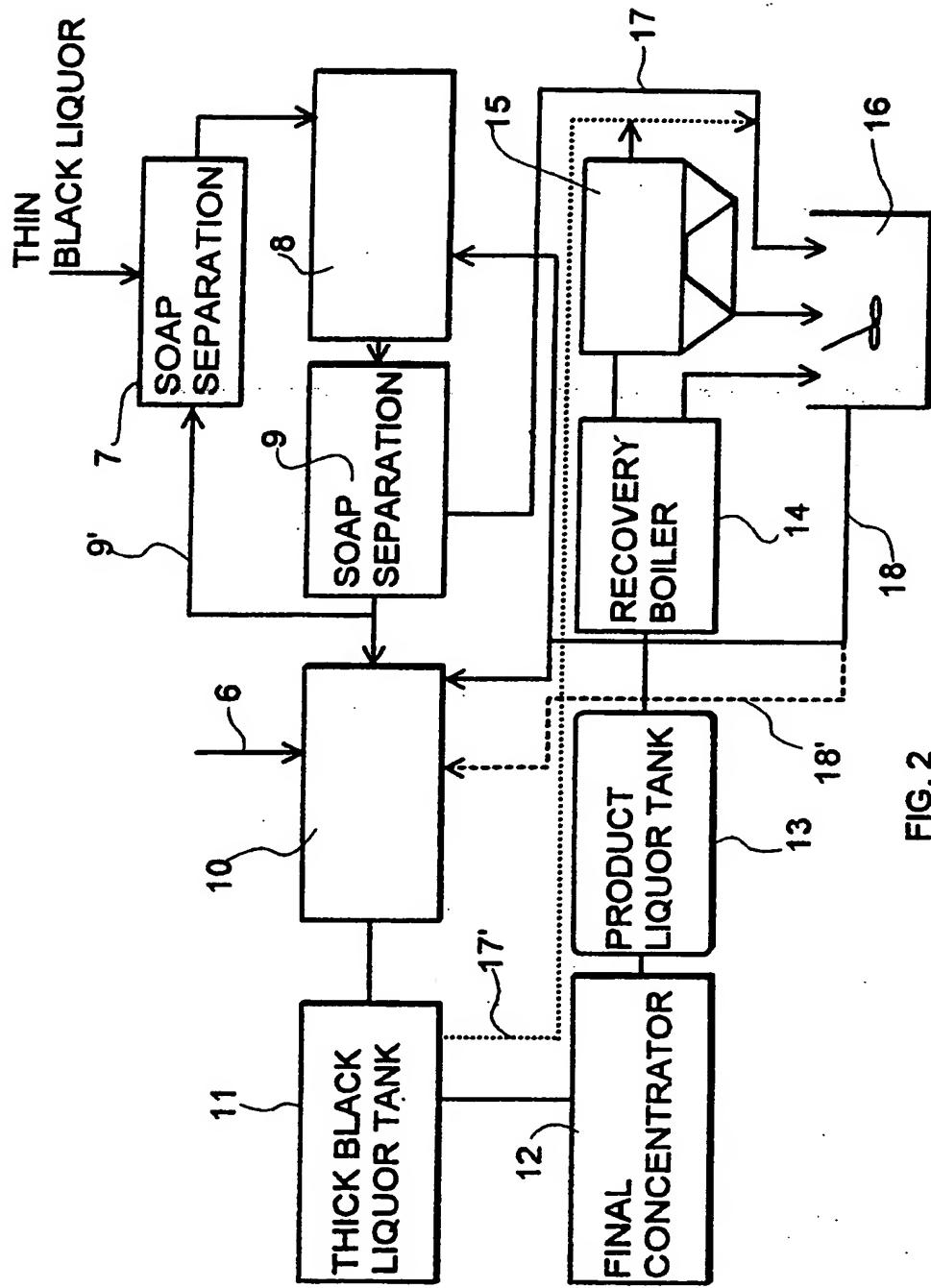


FIG. 2

1
INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/FI 94/00466

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC6: D21C 11/12, C02F 11/06

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC6: D21C, C02F

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

SE,DK,FI,NO classes as above

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	Tappi, Volume 64, No 1, January 1981, W.J.Frederick et al, "Disposal of secondary sludge in the kraft recovery system" page 59 - page 62; page 61	1-7
Y	---	11-14
Y	US, A, 5112441 (TUOMO RUOHOLA ET AL), 12 May 1992 (12.05.92), claim 1	11-14
Y	---	
A	FI, B, 80664 (A. AHLSTRÖM OSAKEYHTIÖ), 30 March 1990 (30.03.90)	1-14

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Date of the actual completion of the international search

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

2

International application No.

PCT/FI 94/00466

C (Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	Svensk papperstidning, Volume, No 8, 1979, Ladislav Novak, "Sodium salt scaling in connection with evaporation of black liquors and pure model solutions" page 240 - page 245 -- -----	8-10

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT
Information on patent family members

31/12/94

International application No.
PCT/FI 94/00466

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
US- A- 5112441	12/05/92	SE-A- 8601904	26/10/86
FI-B- 80664	30/03/90	NONE	